WaterSmart Landscape

- *Save money on your water bill*
- *Beautify your property*
- *Reduce maintenance*
- *Protect our environment*

Need Help?

Here are some resources for information about creating a WaterSmart landscape:

1. The **City of Chula Vista Conservation and Environmental Services Department** can assist you. Call a Conservation Specialist for free information at (619) 409-3893 or email Conservation@ci.chula-vista.ca.us
2. **Local water districts** offer recommended plant lists, rebates, and water-saving tips. Call your water district for more information.
   Sweetwater Authority: (619) 409-6779
   Otay Water District: (619) 670-2222
3. **Landscape architects** are licensed and university-trained to design outdoor environments, planting, irrigation, and hardscape. They can help with your whole project, or with smaller trouble spots.
4. **Landscape contractors** are trained and licensed in construction, irrigation, and planting.
5. **Landscape or garden designers** have varying degrees of education, but are usually not licensed. They can help with concepts for garden design and plant choices, and often work with a contractor.
6. **Irrigation consultants** and **irrigation supply stores** are a good resource for information on water-efficient products.
7. **Local nurseries** offer useful information in choosing plants and irrigation equipment.

Photo courtesy of Garden Retreat Design

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CITY OF CHULA VISTA | Department of Conservation & Environmental Services

nature scape

ON THIS PAGE:

1. WaterSmart yards and areas can be beautiful in addition to being Earth-friendly!

2. Monarch Butterfly (Danaus plexippus)

3. Toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia)

4. California Coffeeberry (Rhamnus californica)

5. Cleveland Sage (Salvia clevelandii)

6. A rotating nozzle is easy to install in existing irrigation systems and reduces the amount of water used on lawns and landscapes by about 20-50% compared to a conventional spray head.

7. Weather-based irrigation controllers can help you manage your water use.

8. Permeable paths such as this one allow water to soak into the ground, recharging groundwater and preventing stormwater runoff.

9. Low-volume irrigation reduces water use by efficiently delivering water right at the root zone of plants. The wood chip mulch prevents weeds, helps retain moisture, and prevents erosion.

10. California Lilac (Ceanothus)

11. California native plants support native birds and butterflies, including this American Robin.

12. Rain barrels collect water from rooftops using the downspouts. Once captured, this water can be used for irrigating trees, shrubs, and vegetable gardens.

Make your garden **WaterSmart!**

RESOURCES:

Nifty Fifty:
These plants have been hand-picked for San Diego County because they are attractive, readily available, easy to maintain, long-lasting, and drought-tolerant!
www.20gallonchallenge.com/pdf/Nifty50

California Friendly Garden Guide:
This extensive guide includes plants that are native to California and are perfectly suited to dry summers and mild winters! Search by name, color, plant type, function, and more!
www.bewaterwise.com/knowledge01.html

Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS):
This publication lets you look up the water requirements for specific plant types, allowing you to group plants with similar water needs!
http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/filelibrary/1726/15359.pdf

Watering Calculator:
This free tool makes it fast and easy to update your watering schedule!
www.bewaterwise.com/calculator.html

WaterSmart Checklist

CITY OF CHULA VISTA | Department of Conservation & Environmental Services

Get Started!

- Please fill out project information.
  This is a tool to help you save water and money, as well as a municipal code requirement.
- Complete the "Required Elements" portion of the checklist. All requirements must be met. Check each box to indicate that your landscape project meets the requirement.
- Select the other elements that apply to your project in each section. Not all elements will be appropriate for your project.
- Verify that the minimum requirements have been met. Make sure you have:
  - completed the project information section.
  - checked all the boxes in the "Required Elements" section.
  - met the minimum requirements for each sub-heading.
  - selected at least 12 checkboxes.
- Get ready for a beautiful, drought-resistant, and low-cost garden!

MAIL completed application to:
City of Chula Vista
Department of Conservation
& Environmental Services
276 Fourth Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910

or FAX to:
(619) 476-5310

or RETURN to the box at the permit counter.

For help completing this checklist, contact a Conservation Specialist at (619) 409-3893.

Para mas información en español, llame al (619) 409-3893.

PROJECT INFORMATION

☐ Homeowner
☐ Contractor
☐ Other (specify): _____

Name of person completing form: _____

Homeowner name (if different from above): _____

Site address (project site): _____

Phone number: _____ Email address: _____

REQUIRED ELEMENTS (all must be checked)

☐ **Determine the climate type (write below):**

_____

In Chula Vista, east of the I-805 is considered "inland" where climates are genarally warmer and drier, and landscapes use more water. West of I-805 is considered "coastal" where climates are generally cooler and wetter, and landscapes use less water.

☐ **Prohibit water waste.**
Make sure you irrigate efficiently. Runoff to sidewalks and gutters occurs when water does not have a chance to soak into the ground, such as when it is applied at too high a rate, or on a slope. Low-head drainage occurs when an irrigation device continues to spray water after it has been shut off. Overspray occurs when water is applied outside of the intended area, such as on sidewalks.

☐ **Select water-conserving plants.**
Choose plants that are native to Southern California and your climate type. WaterSmart plants will naturally use less water. See the WaterSmart resources on page 1.

☐ **Limit turf to slopes with a grade of less than 25%.**
Steep slopes make it hard for water to soak in, and watering on slopes can cause erosion and runoff. It is best to use low-volume irrigation and drought tolerant plants on slopes.

☐ **Limit turf everywhere.**
Lawns use more water than almost any other type of landscape feature. In landscape areas that are ornamental and not used for access or play, use WaterSmart ground cover, a deck, or permeable paving to reduce the need for irrigation.

DESIGN ELEMENTS (minimum 2)

☐ **Group plants wisely.**
Place thirsty plants together and WaterSmart plants elsewhere. Find the water use requirements for your plant selections at:
http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/filelibrary/1726/15359.pdf

☐ **Plant native plants.**
Plants that are native to Southern California are adapted to our climate and use less water than non-natives.

☐ **Install French drains and mulch to eliminate runoff.**
French drains are basically just a ditch or trench filled with gravel or rock to redirect surface water away from an area. These can be used to help capture water and use it in the landscape before it runs off onto the streets or sidewalks.

☐ **Use separate valves.**
Use separate irrigation valves for groups of plants with different water use requirements.

☐ **Do not install traditional spray heads in planting areas less than 8 feet wide.**
Traditional sprinkler heads spray too large of an area for narrow planters. Appropriately-sized sprinkler heads will limit overspray into adjacent areas.

☐ **Install check valves.**
Check valves ensure that devices do not leak after they are shut off by the controller.

☐ **Install master valve and high flow shut-off sensor.**
These devices detect and automatically shut off water if a nozzle or irrigation line breaks.

☐ **Install a weather-based irrigation controller.**
These devices communicate with satellites and collect weather data to automatically customize your irrigation system.

☐ **Install a rain garden or rain harvest system.**
Rain gardens capture and/or store rainwater to be used for landscape irrigation.

☐ **Install a code-approved graywater system.**
Graywater systems capture and move wastewater from domestic activities (like laundry) for use in landscape irrigation.

☐ **Install drip irrigation or soaker hoses.**
These are ideal for watering trees, shrubs, and garden beds.

☐ **Install rotating spray nozzles.**
These are a great alternative to traditional spray nozzles used for irrigating lawns and can reduce water use by 20-50%.

☐ **Install synthetic turf.**
Synthetic turf maintains the look of a lawn, but because it is not living, it requires much less water.

☐ **Use re-circulating water in ornamental water features.**
Reusing the same water reduces the need for additional water input.

OPERATION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND MAINTENANCE (minimum 5)

☐ **Program your irrigation controller.**
Use a watering schedule appropriate to the season and your area. Use this free online tool to help you easily reprogram your controller every season to maximize efficiency:
www.bewaterwise.com/calculator.html

☐ **Mulch.**
Keep a 3 inch layer of mulch on all exposed soil surfaces to retain moisture, deter weeds, and keep the soil from eroding. Examples of mulch materials include bark, compost, composted manure, grass clippings, newspaper, shredded leaves, straw, rock/gravel, and synthetic varieties.

☐ **Control weeds.**
Weeds steal water needed by desirable plants, house pests, and present fire danger during the dry season. Mulch and weeding are effective ways to limit weeds.

☐ **Get certified as a NatureScape for FREE.**
This is an easy way to get some help making WaterSmart and sustainable landscape choices.

By checking the box above, you indicate that you would like the Conservation Department to contact you with more information about getting your project certified as a "Backyard Habitat" through the City's FREE NatureScape program. You can help create and preserve wildlife habitat and native plant communities.

☐ **Protect soils from compaction during construction.**
Soil is at most risk for compaction when the soil is wet, generally between October and April. If your project occurs during a wetter season, make sure to specify areas that are off limits for cars and heavy equipment. Compact soils cannot absorb water as well and are more likely to have runoff.

☐ **Water at night.**
Watering only in the early morning before 8 am reduces water lost to evaporation during the heat of the day.

☐ **Eliminate chemical use in your garden.**
Use preventative methods like mulch and non-chemical methods (digging out weeds or using beneficial insects for insect control) whenever possible. Choose only the least toxic and least persistent pesticides available. This helps keep gardens safe for people, pets, and wildlife. Plus, more fertilizer means more watering! For more information, visit www.chulavistaca.gov/goto/composting.

☐ **Mow higher and use a mulching or electric mower.**
Set your mower to 2 to 2 1/2 inches for bluegrass, 2 to 3 inches for tall fescue, and 1 inch for Bermuda grass to reduce irrigation needs.

☐ **Aerate compacted soils.**
This is especially important for landscape areas that cannot be protected during constructions projects. Compaction makes it difficult for water to drain and for plants to develop strong root systems.

☐ **Water only plants.**
Adjust your irrigation system to make sure not to water sidewalks, streets, or your house.

☐ **Provide a 24 inch buffer between turf and hardscape.**
A hardscape is simply a surface that water cannot penetrate. Examples of these kinds of surfaces include cement and other paved surfaces.

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